NCA
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EMPLOYMENT GAIN AND BUSINESS UPTURN

ANNCR:

THERE ARE NEW GAINS IN EMPLOYMENT, AND A DROP IN UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AS SHOWN BY THE LATEST GOVERNMENT STATISTICS. VOA BUSINESS EDITOR FRANK FEINBERG HAS THIS BACKGROUND REPORT:

VOICE:

THE FIGURES JUST RELEASED (APRIL SECOND) BY THE U.S. LABOR DEPARTMENT ARE ENCOURAGING. AMERICANS GAINFULLY EMPLOYED IN MARCH REACHED A RECORD EIGHTY-SIX POINT SEVEN MILLION PERSONS. AND UNEMPLOYMENT AGAIN DECLINED -- TO SEVEN AND ONE-HALF PER CENT OF THE LABOR FORCE. THIS IS THE LOWEST PERCENTAGE IN MORE THAN ONE-YEAR.

EMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN RISING. AND UNEMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN INCHING ITS WAY DOWN IN RECENT MONTHS, AS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY IN THE NATION GATHERS MOMENTUM. OFFICIALS AT BOTH GENERAL MOTORS AND FORD ARE RAISING THEIR SALES ESTIMATES AS THE BIG AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY CONTINUES ITS SHARP REBOUND.

INDUSTRY LEADERS NOW ARE TALKING ABOUT SALES OF TEN-MILLION OR MORE AUTOS AND TRUCKS THIS YEAR.

ANOTHER BASIC INDUSTRY, STEEL, APPEARS TO BE ACCELERATING, AS CONSUMPTION RISES MORE THAN PREDICTED. PURCHASING AGENTS ARE ACCUMULATING STEEL INVENTORIES AS THEY SEE IMPROVED ORDERS FOR THEIR OWN PRODUCTS. IRON AGE MAGAZINE, THE INDUSTRY JOURNAL, SAYS A NEW FORECAST OF ONE-HUNDRED MILLION METRIC TONS FOR THE YEAR MAY BE FORTHCOMING IN A MONTH FROM NOW.

EVERY SILVER LINING HAS ITS CLOUD. AND IN THE CASE OF THE CURRENT U.S. ECONOMIC RECOVERY. . . AND HIGHER EMPLOYMENT. . .

THE CLOUD IS UNEMPLOYMENT. EVEN WITH THE STEADY IMPROVEMENT SO FAR THIS YEAR, SEVEN-MILLION AMERICANS WERE LOOKING FOR JOBS IN MARCH. THIS IS A DECREASE OF ABOUT ONE-HUNDRED THOUSAND FROM FEBRUARY, BUT STILL HIGH BY AMERICAN STANDARDS.

WHAT TO DO? PRESIDENT FORD, SUPPORTED BY HIS ECONOMIC ADVISERS AND MANY BUSINESS PEOPLE, BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS TO ASSIST PRIVATE INDUSTRY. THIS, TO CREATE NEW JOBS FOR THE GROWING NUMBER OF TEENAGERS AND WOMEN SEEKING WORK -- AS WELL AS FOR WORKERS WHO LOST THEIR JOBS IN THE RECESSION.

ON THE OTHER HAND, MANY DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEGISLATORS AND OTHER LIBERALS IN THE COUNTRY ARE CALLING FOR MORE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS IN THE FORM OF JOB TRAINING AND PUBLIC SERVICE JOBS. IN AN ELECTION YEAR, JOBS ARE A BIG ISSUE. AND THERE ARE POLITICAL OVERTURES TO ACTIONS. BUT, THERE IS CONSENSUS -- BOTH AMONG ECONOMISTS AND POLITICIANS -- BOTH IN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD -- THAT THESE TRADITIONAL MODES OF COMBATTING UNEMPLOYMENT NO LONGER ARE SUFFICIENT.

GH/RCS